

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-10

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 PM-03 NSC-10 NSCE-00 CIAE-00

INR-10 NSAE-00 RSC-01 OMB-01 TRSE-00 EB-03 ACDA-10

L-02 PRS-01 SAJ-01 DRC-01 /068 W

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R 171042Z OCT 73

FM AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2200

INFO USMISSION NATO

SECDEF WASHDC

USNMR SHAPE

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

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LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDSA

TAGS: PFOR, MCAP, NL, NATO

SUBJECT: STATE SECRETARY STEMERDINK ON DUTCH DEFENSE

PLANS

1. SUMMARY: DURING CALL OCT 15, DEFENSE STATE SECRETARY STEMERDINK INFORMED DCM THAT GON DEFENSE WHITE PAPER WOULD APPEAR AT END OF JANUARY 1974 AND BE PRESENTED TO PARLIAMENT SOON THEREAFTER. STEMERDINK SAID GON WILL PROBABLY REPLACE STARFIGHTER WITH COBRA BUT IS THINKING OF FIRST AIRCRAFT DELIVERY IN 1980-81. HE SAID FINAL DECISION ON REPLACING HONEST JOHN WOULD BE MADE END THIS YEAR. STEMERDINK SAID GON SUPPORTED NEW EDIP AND WOULD CONTRIBUTE ABOUT 8 OR 9 PERCENT OF TOTAL COST. HE NOTED GON WOULD BE REPLACING ALL ITS FRIGATES IN 1977-85 TIMEFRAME. STEMERDINK SAID MOD HAD NO OBJECTION TO AFCENT RELOCATION (SEPTEL). HE THINKS PROGRESS IN MBFR TALKS WOULD DIMINISH PRESSURE FOR NON-FIRST USE

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DECLARATION. HE IS STILL UNCERTAIN AS TO WHEN HE CAN

VISIT US BUT IS HOPING FOR THE FIRST QUARTER OF 1974.

END SUMMARY.

2. DCM AND EMBOFF CALLED ON STATE SECRETARY FOR DEFENSE (MATERIEL) STEMERDINK OCT 15. DCM, NOTING EASE WITH WHICH BUDGET HAD GONE THROUGH PARLIAMENT, SUGGESTED GON SEEMED TO HAVE SUFFICIENT PARLIAMENTARY SUPPORT TO TAKE DIFFICULT AND POTENTIALLY UNPOPULAR DEFENSE DECISIONS. DCM THEN RAISED QUESTION OF STARFIGHTER REPLACEMENT. STEMERDINK SAID DECISION ON STARFIGHTER REPLACEMENT WOULD BE ANNOUNCED IN DEFENSE WHITE PAPER WHICH HE EXPECTED WOULD BE READY BY END OF JANUARY 1974. HE SAID GON WAS NOT RPT NOT INTERESTED IN EITHER MIRAGE OR VIGGEN AND WOULD PROBABLY PURCHASE COBRA, ALTHOUGH HE ALSO MENTIONED JAGUAR AND ALPHA-JET AND ALLUDED TO PROBLEM OF "BUYING EUROPEAN." HE SAID HE UNDERSTOOD FIRST COBRA DELIVERIES COULD BE MADE IN 1980-1981. STARFIGHTERS WOULD HAVE TO LAST UNTIL THEN. CHARGE, WHO SAID HE THOUGHT COBRA COULD BE READY CONSIDERABLY IN ADVANCE OF THAT DATE, PROMISED TO CHECK THIS OUT AND INFORM HIM. STEMERDINK SHOWED GRAPH PREPARED BY AIR FORCE INDICATING FIRST COBRA DELIVERY WOULD BE IN 1980-81. ASKED WHETHER STARFIGHTER REPLACEMENT WOULD PRESENT PROBLEMS, IN VIEW ATTITUDE LEFT WING OF DUTCH LABOR PARTY AND RADICALS, STEMERDINK SAID HE THOUGHT NOT. HE SAID DUTCH FINANCIAL SITUATION AT THIS MOMENT SUCH THAT THERE COULD BE NO MAJOR EQUIPMENT PURCHASES IN THE NEAR TERM BUT HE DID NOT ANTICIPATE PROBLEM GIVEN AND LEAD-TIME HE HAD MENTIONED.

3. LAND FORCES SPECIALIZATION--LANCE. QUERIED ON STATUS OF LANCE DECISION, ESPAECIALLY IN VIEW CONCLUSINS LAND FORCES SUB-GROUP'S ECOND WORKING PAPER (USNATO 4866), STEMERDINK SAID DECISION ON HONEST JOHN REPLACEMENT HAD STILL NOT BEEN MADE AND WOULD BE MADE AT END OF YEAR. HE COULD NOT SAY IN WHICH DIRECTION THE DECISION WOULD GO. HE NOTED THAT THERE WAS STRONG OPPOSITION TO LANCE PURCHASE WITHIN THE CABINET AND ESPECIALLY ON PART OF PRIME MINISTER DEN UYL. ASKED ABOUT RELUCTANCE

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OF OTHER NATO PARTNERS TO TAKE ON SSM ROLE AND POSSIBLE DUTCH COMPENSATORY MEASURES, STEMERDINK SAID ONLY THAT THERE WAS SOME THOUGHT BEING IBEN TO HOWITZER USE TO FULFILL AT LEAST PART OF HONEST JOHN TASK.

4. NAVAL PROGRAM. DCM MENTIONED HIS RECENT VISIT TO DUTCH ASW SHIP AT DEN HELDER NAVLA BASE AND EMPHASZIED EXTREMELY FAVORABLE IMPRESSION GON NAVY HAD MADE. STATE SECRETARY

SAID DECISION HAD JUST BEEN MADE TO REPLACE ALL FRIGATES
IN DUTCH NAVY IN 1977-1985 TIME SPAN. THUS THERE WOULD
BE COMPLETELY MODERN FLEET BY 1985. STEMERDINK ASKED
THAT THIS DECISION BE CLOSELY HELD SINCE HE WANTED
"SOMETHING NEW" FOR THE DEFENSE WHITE PAPER. (PLEASE PROTECT
THIS INFORMATION AND STEMERDINK AS SOURCE).

5. NON-FIRST USE. STATE SECRETARY WAS QUERIED ABUT
PROGRESS OF NETHERLANDS PEACE INSTITUTE STUDY ON NON-
FIRST USE (THE HAGUE 4530 AND USNATO 4837). HE SAID HE
PERSONALLY WAS AGAINST SUCH DECLARATION. HE EXPECTED
PEACE INSTITUTE'S STUDY (WITH WHICH HE WAS QUITE
FAMILIAR) WOULD ALSO RECOMMEND AGAINST SUCH
DECLARATION. STEMERDINK STRESSED, HOWEVER, THAT THERE IS
VERY STRONG SENTIMENT FOR SUCH DECLARATION ESPECIALLY
WITHIN HIS OWN LABOR PARTY. STEMERDINK WAS HOPEFUL
MBFR TALKS WOULD HAVE SOME POSITIVE RESULT IN
1975 WHICH WOULD PERSUADE LABOR PARTY CONGRESS ON
FOREIGN POLICY (1975) THAT NON-FIRST USE DECLARATION
UNNECESSARY AND THAT CONTINUED DUTCH NATO MEMBERSHIP
WORTHWHILE.

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6. BURDEN-SHARING. STATE SECRETARY WAS ASKED HIS REACTION TO US BURDEN-SHARING PAPER PRESENTED IN NAC OCT 10 (USNATO 4855). STEMERDINK SAID GON WAS EXTREMELY SENSITIVE TO PROBLEM OF BURDEN-SHARING AND WAS THEREFORE SUPPORTING NEW EDIP IN WHICH NETHERLANDS WOULD BE TAKING ON SHARE OF 8 OR 9 PERCENT OF TOTAL COST. QUERIED ABOUT RECENT MAGAZINE ARTICLE IN WHICH DEFENSE MINISTER VREDELING HAD DISCUSSED MULTI-LATERAL OFFSET EFFORT IN BURDEN-SHARING CONTEXT, STEMERDINK SAID HE PERSONALLY HAD ALWAYS THOUGHT OF OFFSET IN BURDEN-SHARING TERMS. HE STRESSED, HOWEVER, EDIP WAS FIRST APPROACH TO BURDEN-SHARING PROBLEM AND THAT OFFSET WAS SECONDARY.

7. STEMERDINK'S TRIP TO THE US. DCM RAISED POSSIBILITY OF STEMERDINK VISITING US, SOMETHING HE HAD DISCUSSED IN PREVIOUS CONVERSATIONS WITH HIM. STEMERDINK SAID HE WAS LOOKING FORWARD TO US VISIT BUT WAS UNABLE TO STATE WHEN THIS WAS POSSIBLE. HE WAS TIED UP WITH

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WHITE PAPER UNTIL END OF YEAR AND WAS STILL UNCERTAIN ON EXACTLY WHEN WHITE PAPER WOULD BE DISCUSSED IN PARLIAMENT. THUS IT WAS DIFFICULT TO MAKE ANY PLANS, BUT HE WAS HOPING FOR SOME TIME IN FIRST QUARTER OF 1974.

8. COMMENT: STEMERDINK WAS EXTREMELY POSITIVE ABOUT COBRA PROCUREMENT. SECOND CHAMBER FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN DANKERT, WHO IS ALSO CHAIRMAN OF NATIONAL DEFENSE COMMITTEE, (MOD ADVISORY GROUP), HAD TOLD EMBOFF SOME DAYS AGO THAT HE TOO WAS CONVINCED GON WOULD PROCURE COBRA BUT NOT UNTIL 1980, THUS POSTPONING IMPLEMENTATION OF POTENTIALLY UNPOPULAR AND EXPENSIVE DECISION FOR SEVERAL YEARS. WE NOTE THAT DESPITE STEMERDINK'S RELATIVELY STRONG ASSURANCE, MUCH COULD HAPPEN WITHIN NEXT SIX YEARS, E.G. NEW ELECTIONS, DEVELOPNETS IN MBFR, CSCE, ETC. THUS DECISION IN PRINCIPLE ON STARFIGHTER REPLACEMENT MAY SIMPLY BE DEVICE TO POSTPONE DIFFICULT DECISION UNTIL DECISION OBE. HONEST JOHN REPLACEMENT DECISION MUST BE MADE BY END OF YEAR. DESPITE STEMERDINK'S ASSURANCES FINAL DECISION HAS NOT BEEN MADE, MFA SOURCES HERE INDICATE LANCE WILL NOT RPT NOT BE PROCURED AND IF PROCUREMENT STILL LIVE OPTION WE THINK STEMERDINK MIGHT HAVE MENTIONED IT. STEMERDINK SEEMED RELUCTANT TO GO INTO MUCH DETAIL ON NEW EDIP AND WE PRESUME GON WILL BE DISCUSSING WITHIN NATO.

9. AS ALWAYS WE WERE STUCK BY AUTHORITATIVENESS
WITH WHICH STEMERDINK SPEAKS. WITH MINISTER VREDELING
STILL WORKING INTO JOB AND RELATIVELY WEAK COLLEAGUE
(MOMMERSTEEG), STEMERDINK STILL SEEKS KEY DECISION
MAKER WITHIN MOD. THOUGH HE WILL NOT BE ACTIVELY
INVOLVED IN NPG, WE ARE HOPEFUL APPOINTMENTS CAN
BE ARRANGED FOR STEMERDINK WITH SOME OF OUR NPG
VISITORS NEXT MONTH.

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